

work, function and action is the whole sense of the Gita's idea of Karma.

And from this emphasis on the inner truth and not on the outer form arises the spiritual significance and power which the Gita assigns to the following of the Swadharma. That is the really important bearing of the passage. Too much has been made of its connection with the outer social order, as if the object of the Gita were to support that for its own sake or to justify it by a religio-philosophical theory. In fact it lays very little stress on the external rule and a very great stress on the internal law which the Varna system attempted to put into regulated outward practice. And it is on the individual and spiritual value of this law and not on its communal and economic or other social and cultural importance that the eye of the thought is fixed in this passage. The Gita accepted the Vedic theory of sacrifice, but gave it a profound turn, an inner, subjective and universal meaning, a spiritual sense and direction which alters all its values. Here too and in the same way it accepts the theory of the four orders of men, but gives to it a profound turn, an inner, subjective and universal meaning, a spiritual sense and direction. And immediately the idea behind the theory changes its values and becomes an enduring and living truth not bound up with the transience of a particular social form and order. What the Gita is concerned with is not the validity of the Aryan social order now abolished or in a state of deliquescence.,

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—if that were all, its principle of the Swabhava and Swadharma would have no permanent truth or value,—but the relation of a man's outward life to his inward being, the evolution of his action from his soul and inner law of nature.

And we see in fact that the Gita itself indicates very clearly its intention when it describes the work of the Brahmin and the Kshatriya not in terms of external function, not defined as learning, priest-work and letters or government, war and politics, but entirely in terms of internal character. The language reads a little curiously to our ear. Calm, self-control, askesis, purity, long-suffering, candour, knowledge, acceptance and practice of spiritual truth would not ordinarily be described as a man's function, work or life occupation. Yet this is precisely what the Gita means and says,—that these things, their development, their expression in conduct, their power to cast into form the law of the sattwic nature are the real work of the Brahmin : learning, religious ministration and the other outer functions are only its most suitable field, a favourable means of this inner development, its appropriate self-expression, its way of fixing itself into firmness, of type and externalised solidity of character. War, government, politics, leadership and rule are a similar field and means for the Kshatriya ; but his real work is the development, the expression in conduct, the power to cast into form and dynamic rhythm of movement the law of the active battling royal or warrior spirit.

The work of the Vaishya and Sudra is expressed in terms of external function, and this opposite turn may have some significance. For the temperament moved to production and wealth-getting or limited in the circle of labour and service, the mercantile and the servile mind, are usually turned outward, more occupied with the external values of their work than its power for character, and this disposition is not so favourable to a sattwic or spiritual action of the nature. That too is the reason why a commercial and industrial age or a society preoccupied with the idea of work and labour creates around it an atmosphere more favourable to the material than the spiritual life, more adapted to vital efficiency than to the subtler perfection of the high-reaching mind and spirit. Nevertheless, this kind of nature too and its functions have their inner significance, their spiritual value and can be made a means and power for perfection. As has been said elsewhere, not alone the Brahmin with his ideal of spirituality, ethical purity and knowledge and the Kshatriya with his ideal of nobility, chivalry and high character, but the wealth-seeking Vaishya, the toil-imprisoned Sudra, woman with her narrow, circumscribed and subject life, the very outcast born from a womb of sin, *papayonayah*, can by this road rise at once towards the highest inner greatness and spiritual freedom, towards perfection, towards the liberation and fulfilment of the divine element in the human being.

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Three propositions suggest themselves even at the first view and may be taken as implicit in all that the Gita says in this passage. First, all action must be determined from within because each man has in him something his own, some characteristic principle and inborn power of his nature. That is the efficient power of his spirit, that creates the dynamic form of his soul in nature and to express and perfect it by action, to make it effective in capacity and conduct and life is his work, his true Karma: that points him to the right way of his inner and outer living and is the right starting point for his farther development. Next, there are broadly four types of nature each with its characteristic function and ideal rule of work and character and the type indicates the man's proper field and should trace for him his just circle of function in his outer social existence. Finally, whatever work a man does, if done according to the law of his being, the truth of his nature, can be turned Godwards and made an effective means of spiritual liberation and perfection. The first and last of these propositions are suggestions of an evident truth and justice. The ordinary way of man's individual and social living seems indeed to be a contradiction of these principles; for certainly we bear a terrible weight of external necessity, rule and law and our need for self-expression, for the development of our true person, our real soul, our inmost characteristic law of nature in life is at every turn interfered with, thwarted, forced from its course,

given a very poor chance and scope by environmental influences. Life, State, society, family, all surrounding powers seem to be in a league to lay their yoke on our spirit, compel us into their moulds, impose on us their mechanical interest and rough immediate convenience. We become parts of a machine; we are not, are hardly allowed to be in the true sense, *manushya*, *purusha*, souls, minds, free children of the spirit empowered to develop the highest characteristic perfection of our being and make it our means of service to the race. It would seem that we are not what we make ourselves, but what we are made. Yet the more we advance in knowledge, the more the truth of the Gita's rule is bound to appear. The child's education ought to be an out-bringing of all that is best, most powerful, most intimate and living in his nature; the mould into which the man's action and development ought to run is that of his innate quality and power. He must acquire new things, but he will acquire them best, most vitally on the basis of his own developed type and inborn force. And so too the functions of a man ought to be determined by his natural turn, gift and capacities. The individual who develops freely in this manner will be a living soul and mind and will have a much greater power for the service of the race. And we are able now to see more clearly that this rule is true not only of the individual but of the community and the nation, the group soul, the collective man. The second proposition of the

four types and their functions is more open to dispute. It may be said that it is too simple and positive, that it takes no sufficient account of the complexity of life and the plasticity of human nature, and, whatever the theory or its intrinsic merits, the outward social application must lead precisely to that tyranny of a mechanical rule which is the flat contradiction of all law of Swadharma. But it has a profounder meaning under the surface which gives it a less disputable value. And even if we reject it, the third proposition will yet stand in its general significance. Whatever a man's work and function in life, he can, if it is determined from within or if he is allowed to make it a self-expression of his nature, turn it into a means of growth and of a greater inner perfection. And whatever it be, if he performs his natural function in the right spirit, if he enlightens it by the ideal mind, if he turns its action to the uses of the Godhead within, serves with it the Spirit manifested in the universe or makes it a conscious instrumentation for the purposes of the Divine in humanity, he can transmute it into a means towards the highest spiritual perfection and freedom.

But the Gita's teaching here has a still profounder significance if we take it not as a detached quotation self-contained in meaning, as is too often done, but as we should do, in connection with all that it has been saying throughout the work and especially in the last twelve chapters. The Gita's philosophy of life and works is that all proceeds

from the Divine Existence, the transcendent and universal Spirit. All is a veiled manifestation of the Godhead, Vasudeva, *yato pravrittir bhûtânâm yena sarvam idam tatam*, and to unveil the Immortal within and in the world, to dwell in unity with the Soul of the universe, to rise in consciousness, knowledge, will, love, spiritual delight to oneness with the supreme Godhead, to live in the highest spiritual nature with the individual and natural being delivered from shortcoming and ignorance and made a conscious instrument for the works of the divine Shakti is the perfection of which humanity is capable and the condition of immortality and freedom. But how is this possible when in fact we are enveloped in natural ignorance, the soul shut up in the prison of ego, overcome, beset, hammered and moulded by the environment, mastered by the mechanism of Nature, cut off from our hold on the reality of our own secret spiritual force? The answer is that all this natural action, however now enveloped in a veiled and contrary working, still contains the principle of its own evolving freedom and perfection. A Godhead is seated in the heart of every man and is the Lord of this mysterious action of Nature. And though this Spirit of the universe, this One who is all, seems to be turning us on the wheel of the world as if mounted on a machine by the force of Maya, shaping us in our ignorance as the potter shapes a pot, as the weaver a fabric, by some skilful mechanical principle, yet is this spirit our own greatest self

and it is according to the real idea, the truth of ourselves, that which is growing in us and finding always new and more adequate forms in birth after birth, in our animal and human and divine life, in that which we were, that which we are, that which we shall be,—it is in accordance with this inner soul-truth that, as our opened eyes will discover, we are progressively shaped by this spirit within us in its all-wise omnipotence. This machinery of ego, this tangled complexity of the three gunas, mind, body, life, emotion, desire, struggle, thought, aspiration, endeavour, this locked interaction of pain and pleasure, sin and virtue, striving and success and failure, soul and environment, myself and others, is only the outward imperfect form taken by a higher spiritual Force in me which pursues through its vicissitudes the progressive self-expression of the divine reality and greatness I am secretly in spirit and shall overtly become in nature. This action contains in itself the principle of its own success, the principle of the Swabhava and Swadharma.

The Jiva is in self-expression a portion of the Purushottama. He represents in Nature the power of the supreme Spirit, he is in his personality that Power; he brings out in an individual existence the potentialities of the Soul of the universe. This Jiva itself is spirit and not the natural ego; the spirit and not the form of ego is our reality and inner soul principle. The true force of what we are and can be is there in that higher spiritual Power and



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the mechanical Maya of the three gunas is not the inmost and fundamental truth of its movements; it is only a present executive energy, an apparatus of lower convenience, a scheme of outward exercise and practice. The spiritual Nature which has become this multiple personality in the universe, *parâ prakṛitir jīva-bhūtâ*, is the basic stuff of our existence: all the rest is lower derivation and outer formation from a highest hidden activity of the spirit. And in Nature each of us has a principle and will of our own becoming; each soul is a force of self-consciousness that formulates an idea of the Divine in it and guides by that its action and evolution, its progressive self-finding, its constant varying self-expression, its apparently uncertain but secretly inevitable growth to fullness. That is our Swabhava, our own real nature; that is our truth of being which is finding now only a constant partial expression in our various becoming in the world. The law of action determined by this Swabhava is our right law of self-shaping, function, working, our Swadharma.

This principle obtains throughout cosmos; there is everywhere the one Power at work, one common universal Nature, but in each grade, form, energy, genus, species, individual creature she follows out a major Idea and minor ideas and principles of constant and complex variation that found both the permanent dharma of each and its temporary dharmas. These fix for it the law of its being in becoming, the curve of its birth and persistence and change,

the force of its self-preservation and self-increasing, the lines of its stable and evolving self-expression and self-finding, the rules of its relations to all the rest of the expression of the Self in the universe. To follow the law of its being, Swadharma, to develop the idea in its being, Swabhava, is its ground of safety, its right walk and procedure. That does not in the end chain down the soul to any present formulation, but rather by this way of development it enriches itself most surely with new experiences assimilated to its own law and principle and can most powerfully grow and break at its hour beyond present moulds to a higher self-expression. To be unable to maintain its own law and principle, to fail to adapt itself to its environment in such a way as to adapt the environment to itself and make it useful to its own nature is to lose its self, forfeit its right of self, deviate from its way of self, is perdition, *vinashti*, is falsehood, death, anguish of decay and dissolution and necessity of painful self-recovery often after eclipse and disappearance, is the vain circuit of the wrong road retarding our real progress. This law obtains in one form or another in all Nature; it underlies all that action of law of universality and law of variation revealed to us by science. The same law obtains in the life of the human being, his many lives in many human bodies. Here it has an outward play and an inward spiritual truth, and the outward play can only put on its full and real meaning when we have found the inward spiritual

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truth and enlightened all our action with the values of the spirit. This great and desirable transformation can be effected with rapidity and power in proportion to our progress in self-knowledge.

And first we have to see that the Swabhava means one thing in the highest spiritual nature and takes quite another form and significance in the lower nature of the three gunas. There too it acts, but is not in full possession of itself, is seeking as it were for its own true law in a half light or a darkness and goes on its way through many lower forms, many false forms, endless imperfections, perversions, self-losings, self-findings, seekings after norm and rule before it arrives at self-discovery and perfection. Our nature here is a mixed weft of knowledge and ignorance, of truth and falsehood, of success and failure, of right and wrong, of finding and losing, of sin and virtue. It is always the Swabhava that is looking for self-expression and self-finding through all these things, *swabhâvas tu pravartate*, a truth which should teach us universal charity and equality of vision, since we are all subject to the same perplexity and struggle. These motions belong, not to the soul, but to the nature. The Purushottama is not limited by this ignorance; he governs it from above and guides the soul through its changes. The pure immutable self is not touched by these movements; it witnesses and supports by its intangible eternity this mutable Nature in her vicissitudes. The real soul of the individual, the central being in us,

is greater than these things, but accepts them in its outward evolution in Nature. And when we have got at this real soul, at the changeless universal self sustaining us and at the Purushottama, the Lord within us who presides over and guides the whole action of Nature, we have found all the spiritual meaning of the law of our life. For we become aware of the Master of existence expressing himself for ever in his infinite quality, *ananta-guna*, in all beings. We become aware of a fourfold presence of the Divinity, a Soul of self-knowledge and world-knowledge, a Soul of strength and power that seeks for and finds and uses its powers, a Soul of mutual-ity and creation and relation and interchange between creature and creature, a Soul of works that labours in the universe and serves all in each and turns the labour of each to the service of all others. We become aware too of the individual Power of the Divine in us, that which directly uses these fourfold powers, assigns our strain of self-expression, determines our divine work and office and raises us through it all to his universality in manifoldness till we can find by it our spiritual oneness with him and with all that he is in the cosmos. •

The external idea of the four orders of men in life is concerned only with the more outward working of this truth of the divine action; it is limited to one side of its operation in the functioning of the three gunas. It is true that in this birth men fall very largely into one of four types, the man of

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knowledge, the man of power, the productive vital man, the man of rude labour and service. These are not fundamental divisions, but stages of self-development in our manhood. The human being starts with a sufficient load of ignorance and inertia; his first state is one of rude toil enforced on his animal indolence by the needs of the body, by the impulsion of life, by necessity of Nature and, beyond a certain point of need, by some form of direct or indirect compulsion which society lays upon him, and those who are still governed by this tamās are the Sudras, the serfs of society who give it their toil and can contribute nothing or very little else in comparison with more developed men to its manifold play of life. By kinetic action man develops the rajasic guṇa in him and we get a second type of man who is driven by a constant instinct for useful creation, production, having, acquisition, holding and enjoying, the middle economic and vital man, the Vaiśhya. At a higher elevation of the rajasic or kinetic quality of our one common nature we get the active man with a more dominant will, with bolder ambitions, with the instinct to act, battle, and enforce his will, at the strongest to lead, command, rule, carry masses of men in his orbit, the fighter, leader, ruler, prince, king, the Kshatriya. And where the sattwic mind predominates, we get the Brahmin, the man with a turn for knowledge, who brings thought, reflection, the seeking for truth and an intelligent or

at the highest a spiritual rule into life and illumines by it his conception and mode of existence.

There is always in human nature something of all these four personalities developed or undeveloped, wide or narrow, suppressed or rising to the surface, but in most men one or the other tends to predominate and seems to take up sometimes the whole space of action in the nature. And in any society we should have all four types,—even, for an example, if we could create a purely productive and commercial society such as modern times have attempted, or for that matter a Sudra society of labour, of the proletariat such as attracts the most modern mind and is now being attempted in one part of Europe and advocated in others. There would still be the thinkers moved to find the law and truth and guiding rule of the whole matter, the captains and leaders of industry who would make all this productive activity an excuse for the satisfaction of their need of adventure and battle and leadership and dominance, the many typical purely productive and wealth-getting men, the average workers satisfied with a modicum of labour and the reward of their labour. But these are quite outward things, and if that were all, this economy of human type would have no spiritual significance. Or it would mean at most, as has been sometimes held in India, that we have to go through these stages of development in our births; for we must perforce proceed progressively through the tamasic, the rajaso-tamasic, the rajasic

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• or rajaso-sattwic to the sattwic nature, ascend and fix ourselves in an inner Brahminhood, *brahmanya*, and then seek salvation from that basis. But in that case there would be no logical room for the Gita's assertion that even the Sudra or Chandala can by turning his life Godwards climb straight to spiritual liberty and perfection.

The fundamental truth is not this outward thing, but a force of our inner being in movement, the truth of the fourfold active power of the spiritual nature. Each Jiva possesses in his spiritual nature these four sides, is a soul of knowledge, a soul of strength and of power, a soul of mutuality and interchange, a soul of works and service, but one side or other predominates in the action and expressive spirit and tinges the dealings of the soul with its embodied nature; it leads and gives its stamp to the other powers and uses them for the principal strain of action, tendency, experience. The Swabhava then follows, not crudely and rigidly as put in the social demarcation, but subtly and flexibly the law of this strain and develops in developing it the other three powers. Thus the pursuit of the impulse of works and service rightly done develops knowledge, increases power, trains closeness or balance of mutuality and skill and order of relation. Each front of the fourfold godhead moves through the enlargement of its own dominant principle of nature and enrichment by the other three towards a total perfection. This development undergoes the

law of the three gunas. There is possible a tamasic and rajasic way of following even the dharma of the soul of knowledge, a brute tamasic and a high sattwic way of following the dharma of power, a forceful rajasic or a beautiful and noble sattwic way of following the dharma of works and service. To arrive at the sattwic way of the inner individual Swadharma and of the works to which it moves us on the ways of life is a preliminary condition of perfection. And it may be noted that the inner Swadharma is not bound to any outward social or other form of action, occupation or function. The soul of works that is satisfied to serve or that element in us can, for example, make the life of the pursuit of knowledge, the life of struggle and power or the life of mutuality, production and interchange a means of satisfying its divine impulse to labour and to service.

And in the end to arrive at the divinest figure and most dynamic soul-power of this fourfold activity is a wide doorway to a swiftest and largest reality of the most high spiritual perfection. This we can do if we turn the action of the Swadharma into a worship of the inner Godhead, the universal Spirit, the transcendent Purushottama and, eventually, surrender the whole action into his hands, *mayi sannyasya karmâni*. Then as we get beyond the limitation of the three gunas, so also do we get beyond the division of the fourfold law and beyond the limitation of all distinctive dharmas, *sarva-*



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*dharmân parityajya*. The Spirit takes up the individual into the universal Swabhava, perfects and unifies the fourfold soul of nature in us and does its self-determined works according to the divine will and the accomplished power of the godhead in the creature.

The Gita's injunction is to worship the Divine by our own work, *swa-karmanâ*; our offering must be the works determined by our own law of being and nature. For from the Divine all movement of creation and impulse to act originates and by him all this universe is extended and for the holding together of the worlds he presides over and shapes all action through the Swabhava. To worship him with our inner and outer activities, to make our whole life a sacrifice of works to the Highest is to prepare ourselves to become one with him in all our will and substance and nature. Our work should be according to the truth within us, it should not be an accommodation with outward and artificial standards: it must be a living and sincere expression of the soul and its inborn powers. For to follow out the living inmost truth of this soul in our present nature will help us eventually to arrive at the immortal truth of the same soul in the now superconscious supreme nature. There we can live in oneness with God and our true self and all beings and, perfected, become a faultless instrument of divine action in the freedom of the immortal Dharma.

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The Teacher has completed all else that he needed to say, he has worked out all the central principles and the supporting suggestions and implications of his message and elucidated the principal doubts and questions that might rise around it, and now all that rests for him to do is to put into decisive phrase and penetrating formula the one last word, the heart itself of the message, the very core of his gospel. And we find that this decisive, last and crowning word is not merely the essence of what has been already said on the matter, not merely a concentrated description of the needed self-discipline, the Sadhana, and of that greater spiritual consciousness which is to be the result of all its effort and askesis; it sweeps out, as it were, yet farther, breaks down every limit and rule, canon and formula and opens into a wide and illimitable spiritual truth with an infinite potentiality of significance. And that is a sign of the profundity, the wide reach, the greatness of spirit of the Gita's teaching. An ordinary religious teaching or philosophical doctrine is well enough satisfied to seize on certain great and vital aspects of truth and turn them into utilisable dogma and instruction, method and practice for the guidance of man in his inner life and the law and form of his

\* Gita XVIII 49-56.

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action ; it does not go farther, it does not open doors out of the circle of its own system, does not lead us out into some widest freedom and unimprisoned largeness. This limitation is useful and indeed for a time indispensable. Man bounded by his mind and will has need of a law and rule, a fixed system, a definite practice selective of his thought and action ; he asks for the single unmistakable hewn path hedged, fixed and secure to the tread, for the limited horizons, for the enclosed resting-places. It is only the strong and few who can move through freedom to freedom. And yet in the end the free soul ought to have an issue out of the forms and systems in which the mind finds its account and takes its limited pleasure. To exceed our ladder of ascent, not to stop short even on the topmost stair but move untrammelled and at large in the wideness of the spirit is a release important for our perfection ; the spirit's absolute liberty is our perfect status. And this is how the Gita leads us : it lays down a firm and sure but very large way of ascent, a great Dharma, and then it takes us out beyond all that is laid down, beyond all dharmas, into infinitely open spaces, divulges to us the hope, lets us into the secret of an absolute perfection founded in an absolute spiritual liberty, and that secret, *gûhyatamam*, is the substance of what it calls its supreme word, that the hidden thing, the inmost knowledge.

And first the Gita restates the body of its message. It summarises the whole outline and

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essence in the short space of fifteen verses, lines of a brief and concentrated expression and significance that miss nothing of the kernel of the matter, couched in phrases of the most lucid precision and clearness. And they must therefore be scanned with care, must be read deeply in the light of all that has gone before, because here it is evidently intended to extract what the Gita itself considers to be the central sense of its own teaching. The statement sets out from the original starting-point of the thought in the book, the enigma of human action, the apparently insuperable difficulty of living in the highest self and spirit while yet we continue to do the works of the world. The easiest way is to give up the problem as insoluble, life and action as an illusion or an inferior movement of existence to be abandoned as soon as we can rise out of the snare of the world into the truth of spiritual being. That is the ascetic solution, if it can be called a solution; at any rate it is a decisive and effective way out of the enigma, a way to which ancient Indian thought of the highest and most meditative kind, as soon as it commenced to turn at a sharp incline from its first large and free synthesis, had moved with an always increasing preponderance. The Gita like the Tantra and on certain sides the later religions attempts to preserve the ancient balance: it maintains the substance and foundation of the original synthesis, but the form has been changed and renovated in the light of a developing spiritual experience. This teaching

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does not evade the difficult problem of reconciling the full active life of man with the inner life in the highest self and spirit; it advances what it holds to be the real solution. It does not at all deny the efficacy of the ascetic renunciation of life for its own purpose, but it sees that that cuts instead of loosening the knot of the riddle and therefore it accounts it an inferior method and holds its own for the better way. The two paths both lead us out of the lower ignorant normal nature of man to the pure spiritual consciousness and so far both must be held to be valid and even one in essence: but where one stops short and turns back, the other advances with a firm subtlety and high courage, opens a gate on unexplored vistas, completes man in God and unites and reconciles in the spirit soul and Nature.

And therefore in the first five of these verses the Gita so phrases its statement that it shall be applicable to both the way of the inner and the way of the outer renunciation and yet in such a manner that one has only to assign to some of their common expressions a deeper and more inward meaning in order to get the sense and thought of the method favoured by the Gita. The difficulty of human action is that the soul and nature of man seem fatally subjected to many kinds of bondage, the prison of the ignorance, the meshes of the ego, the chain of the passions, the hammering insistence of the life of the moment, an obscure and limited circle without an issue. The soul shut up in this circle of

action has no freedom, no leisure or light of self-knowledge to make the discovery of its self and the true value of life and meaning of existence. It has indeed such hints of its being as it can get from its active personality and dynamic nature, but the standards of perfection it can erect there are much too temporal, restricted and relative to be a satisfactory key to its own riddle. How, while absorbed and continually forced outward by the engrossing call of its active nature, is it to get back to its real self and spiritual existence? The ascetic renunciation and the way of the Gita are both agreed that it must first of all renounce this absorption, must cast from it the external solicitation of outward things and separate silent self from active nature; it must identify itself with the immobile spirit and life in the silence. It must arrive at an inner inactivity, *naishkarmya*. It is therefore this saving inner passivity that the Gita puts here as the first object of its Yoga, the first necessary perfection in it or Siddhi. "An understanding without attachment in all things, a soul self-conquered and empty of desire, man attains by renunciation a supreme perfection of *naishkarmya*."

This ideal of renunciation, of a self-conquered stillness, spiritual passivity and freedom from desire is common to all the ancient wisdom. The Gita gives us its psychological foundation with an unsurpassed completeness and clearness. It rests on the common experience of all seekers of self-know-

ledge that there are two different natures and as it were two selves in us. There is the lower self of the obscure mental, vital and physical nature subject to ignorance and inertia in the very stuff of its consciousness and especially in its basis of material substance, kinetic and vital indeed by the power of life but without inherent self-possession and self-knowledge in its action, attaining in the mind to some knowledge and harmony, but only with difficult effort and by a constant struggle with its own disabilities. And there is the higher nature and self of our spiritual being, self-possessed and self-luminous but in our ordinary mentality inaccessible to our experience. At times we get glimpses of this greater thing within us, but we are not consciously within it, we do not live in its light and calm and illimitable splendour. The first of these two very different things is the Gita's nature of the three gunas. Its seeing of itself is centred in the ego idea, its principle of action is desire born of ego, and the knot of ego is attachment to the objects of the mind and sense and the life's desire. The inevitable constant result of all these things is bondage, settled subjection to a lower control, absence of self-mastery, absence of self-knowledge. The other greater power and presence is discovered to be nature and being of the pure spirit unconditioned by ego, that which is called in Indian philosophy self and impersonal Brahman. Its principle is an infinite and an impersonal existence

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one and the same in all : and, since this impersonal existence is without ego, without conditioning quality, without desire, need or stimulus it is immobile and immutable; eternally the same, it regards and supports but does not share or initiate the action of the universe. The soul when it throws itself out into active Nature is the Gita's kshara, its mobile or mutable Purusha; the same soul gathered back into pure silent self and essential spirit is the Gita's akshara, immobile or immutable Purusha.

Then evidently the straight and simplest way to get out of the close bondage of the active nature and back to spiritual freedom is to cast away entirely all that belongs to the dynamics of the ignorance and to convert the soul into a pure spiritual existence. That is what is called becoming Brahman, *brahma-bhûya*. It is to put off the lower mental, vital, physical existence and to put on the pure spiritual being. This can best be done by the intelligence and will, *buddhi*, our present top-most principle. It has to turn away from the things of the lower existence and first and foremost from its effective knot of desire, from our attachment to the objects pursued by the mind and the senses. One must become an understanding unattached in all things, *asaṅga-buddhiḥ sarvatra*. Then all desire passes away from the soul in its silence; it is free from all longings, *vigata-spriha*. That brings with it or it makes possible the subjection of our lower



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and the possession of our higher self, a possession dependent on complete self-mastery, secured by a radical victory and conquest over our mobile nature, *jîtâtmâ*. And all this amounts to an absolute inner renunciation of the desire of things, *sannyâsa*. Renunciation is the way to this perfection and the 'man who has thus inwardly renounced all is described by the Gita as the true Sannyasin. But because the word usually signifies as well an outward renunciation or sometimes even that alone, the Teacher uses another word, *tyâga*, to distinguish the inward from the outward withdrawal and says that Tyaga is better than Sannyasa. The ascetic way goes much farther in its recoil from the dynamic Nature. It is enamoured of renunciation for its own sake and insists on an outward giving up of life and action, a complete quietism of soul and nature. That, the Gita replies, is not possible entirely so long as we live in the body. As far as it is possible, it may be done, but such a rigorous diminution of works is not indispensable: it is not even really or at least ordinarily advisable. The one thing needed is a complete inner quietism and that is all the Gita's sense of *naishkarmya*.

If we ask why this reservation, why this indulgence to the dynamic principle when our object is to become the pure self and the pure self is described as inactive, *aḥartâ*, the answer is that that inactivity and divorce of self from Nature are not the whole truth of our spiritual release. Self and

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Nature are in the end one thing ; a total and perfect spirituality makes us one with all the Divine in self and in nature. In fact this becoming Brahman, this assumption into the self of eternal silence, *brahma-bhûya*, is not all our objective, but only the necessary immense base for a still greater and more marvellous divine becoming, *mad-bhâva*. And to get to that greatest spiritual perfection we have indeed to be immobile in the self, silent in all our members, but also to act in the power, Shakti, Prakriti, the true and high force of the Spirit. And if we ask how a simultaneity of what seem to be two opposites is possible, the answer is that that is the very nature of a complete spiritual being ; always it has this double poise of the Infinite. The impersonal self is silent ; we too must be inwardly silent, impersonal, withdrawn into the spirit. The impersonal self looks on all action as done not by it but by Prakriti ; it regards with a pure equality all the working of her qualities, modes and forces : the soul impersonalised in the self must similarly regard all our actions as done not by itself but by the qualities of Prakriti ; it must be equal in all things, *sarvatra*. And at the same time in order that we may not stop here, in order that we may eventually go forward and find a spiritual rule and direction in our works and not only a law of inner immobility and silence, we are asked to impose on the intelligence and will the attitude of sacrifice, all our action inwardly changed and

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turned into an offering to the Lord of Nature, to the Being of whom she is the self-power, *swâ prakṛitih*, the supreme Spirit. Even we have eventually to renounce all into his hands, to abandon all personal initiation of action, *sarvârambhâh*, to keep our natural selves only as an instrument of his works and his purpose. These things have been already explained fully and the Gita does not here insist, but uses simply without farther qualification the common terms, *sannyâsa* and *naishkarmya*.

A completest inner quietism once admitted as our necessary means towards living in the pure impersonal self, the question how practically it brings about that result is the next issue that arises. "How having attained this perfection, one thus attains to the Brahman, hear from me, O son of Kunti,—that which is the supreme concentrated direction of the knowledge." The knowledge meant here is the Yoga of the Sankhyas,—the Yoga of pure knowledge accepted by the Gita, *jñâna-yogena sânkhyânâm*, so far as it is one with its own Yoga which includes also the way of works of the Yogins, *ṛarma-yogena yoginâm*. But all mention of works is kept back for the moment. For by Brahman here is meant at first the silent, the impersonal, the immutable. The Brahman indeed is both for the Upanishads and the Gita all that is and lives and moves; it is not solely an impersonal Infinite or an unthinkable and incommunicable Absolute, *achintyam avyavahâryam*. All this is

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Brahman, says the Upanishad, all this is Vasudeva, says the Gita,—the supreme Brahman is all that moves or is stable and his hands and feet and eyes and heads and faces are on every side of us. But still there are two aspects of this All,—his immutable eternal self that supports existence and his self of active power that moves abroad in the world movement. It is only when we lose our limited ego personality in the impersonality of the self that we arrive at the calm and free oneness by which we can possess a true unity with the universal power of the Divine in his world movement. Impersonality is a denial of limitation and division, and the cult of impersonality is a natural condition of true being, an indispensable preliminary of true knowledge and therefore a first requisite of true action. It is very clear that we cannot become one self with all or one with the universal Spirit and his vast self-knowledge, his complex will and his wide-spread world-purpose by insisting on our limited personality of ego; for that divides us from others and it makes us bound and self-centred in our view and in our will to action. Imprisoned in personality we can only get at a limited union by sympathy or by some relative accommodation of ourselves to the view-point and feeling and will of others. To be one with all and with the Divine and his will in the cosmos we must become at first impersonal and free from our ego and its claims and from the ego's way of seeing ourselves and the world and others.

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And we cannot do this if there is not something in our being other than the personality, other than the ego, an impersonal self one with all existences. To lose ego and be this impersonal self, to become this impersonal Brahman in our consciousness is therefore the first movement of this Yoga.

How then is this to be done? First, says the Gita, through a union of our purified intelligence with the pure spiritual substance in us by the yoga of the buddhi, *buddhyâ vishuddhayâ yuktaḥ*. This spiritual turning of the buddhi from the outward and downward to the inward and upward look is the essence of the Yoga of knowledge. The purified understanding has to control the whole being, *âtmânâṁ niyamyā*; it must draw us away from attachment to the outward-going desires of the lower nature by a firm and a steady will, *dhṛityâ*, which in its concentration faces entirely towards the impersonality of the pure spirit. The senses must abandon their objects, the mind must cast away the liking and disliking which these objects excite in it,—for the impersonal self has no desires and repulsions; these are vital reactions of our personality to the touches of things, and the corresponding response of the mind and senses to the touches is their support and their basis. An entire control has to be acquired over the mind, speech and body, over even the vital and physical reactions, hunger and cold and heat and physical pleasure and pain; the whole of our being must become indifferent,

unaffected by these things, equal to all outward touches and to their inward reactions and responses. This is the most direct and powerful method, the straight and sharp way of Yoga. There has to be a complete cessation of desire and attachment, *vairâgya*; a strong resort to impersonal solitude, a constant union with the inmost self by meditation is demanded of the seeker. And yet the object of this austere discipline is not to be self-centred in some supreme egoistic seclusion and tranquillity of the sage and thinker averse to the trouble of participation in the world-action; the object is to get rid of all ego. One must put away utterly first the rajasic kind of egoism, egoistic strength and violence, arrogance, desire, wrath, the sense and instinct of possession, the urge of the passions, the strong lusts of life. But afterwards must be discarded egoism of all kinds, even of the most sattwic type; for the aim is to make soul and mind and life free in the end from all imprisoning I-ness and my-ness, *nirmama*. The extinction of ego and its demands of all sorts is the method put before us. For the pure impersonal self which, unshaken, supports the universe has no egoism and makes no demand on thing or person; it is calm and luminously impassive and silently regards all things and persons with an equal and impartial eye of self-knowledge and world-knowledge. Then clearly it is by living inwardly in a similar or identical impersonality that the soul within, released from the

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siege of things, can best become capable of oneness with this immutable Brahman which regards and knows but is not affected by the forms and mutations of the universe.

This first pursuit of impersonality as enjoined by the Gita brings with it evidently a certain completest inner quietism and is identical in its inmost parts and principles of practice with the method of Sannyasa. And yet there is a point at which its tendency of withdrawal from the claims of dynamic Nature and the external world is checked and a limit imposed to prevent the inner quietism from deepening into refusal of action and a physical withdrawal. The renunciation of their objects by the senses, *viçayâns twakṭwâ*, is to be of the nature of Tyaga; it must be a giving up of all sensuous attachment, *rasa*, not a refusal of the intrinsic necessary activity of the senses. One must move among surrounding things and act on the objects of the sense-field with a pure, true and intense, a simple and absolute operation of the senses for their utility to the spirit in divine action, *kevalair indriyaic charan*, and not at all for the fulfilment of desire. There is to be *vairâgya*, not in the common significance of disgust of life or distaste for the world action, but renunciation of *râga*, as also of its opposite, *dwesha*. There must be a withdrawal from all mental and vital liking as from all mental and vital disliking whatsoever. And this is asked not for extinction, but in order that there may be

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a perfect enabling equality in which the spirit can give an unhampered and unlimited assent to the integral and comprehensive divine vision of things and to the integral divine action in Nature. A continual resort to meditation, *dhyâna-yoga-paronityam*, is the firm means by which the soul of man can realise its self of Power and its self of silence. And yet there must be no abandonment of the active life for a life of pure meditation ; action must always be done as a sacrifice to the supreme Spirit. This movement of recoil in the path of Sannyasa prepares an absorbed disappearance of the individual in the Eternal, and renunciation of action and life in the world is an indispensable step in the process. But in the Gita's path of Tyaga it is a preparation rather for the turning of our whole life and existence and of all action into an integral oneness with the serene and immeasurable being, consciousness and will of the Divine, and it preludes and makes possible a vast and total passing upward of the soul out of the lower ego to the inexpressible perfection of the supreme spiritual nature, *parâ prakṛiti*.

This decisive departure of the Gita's thought is indicated in the next two verses, of which the first runs with a significant sequence, "When one has become the Brahman, when one neither grieves nor desires, when one is equal to all beings, then one gets the supreme love and devotion to Me." But in the narrow path of knowledge bhakti, devotion to the personal Godhead, can be only an inferior



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and preliminary movement; the end, the climax is the disappearance of personality in a featureless oneness with the impersonal Brahman in which there can be no place for bhakti: for there is none to be adored and none to adore; all else is lost in the silent immobile identity of the Jiva with the Atman. Here there is given to us something yet higher than the Impersonal,—here there is the supreme Self who is the supreme Ishwara, here there is the supreme Soul and its supreme nature, here there is the Purushottama who is beyond the personal and impersonal and reconciles them on his eternal heights. The ego personality still disappears in the silence of the Impersonal, but at the same time there remains even with this silence at the back the action of a supreme Self, one greater than the Impersonal. There is no longer the lower blind and limping action of the ego and the three gunas, but instead the vast self-determining movement of an infinite spiritual Force, a free immeasurable Shakti. All Nature becomes the power of the one Divine and all action his action through the individual as channel and instrument. In place of the ego there comes forward conscious and manifest the true spiritual individual in the freedom of his real nature, in the power of his supernal status, in the majesty and splendour of his eternal kinship to the Divine, an imperishable portion of the supreme Godhead, an indestructible power of the supreme Prakriti, *mamaivangshah sanâtanah, parâ prakṛitir-*

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*jīva-bhūta*. The soul of man then feels itself to be one in a supreme spiritual impersonality with the Purushottama and in its universalised personality a manifest power of the Godhead. Its knowledge is a light of his knowledge; its will is a force of his will; its unity with all in the universe is a play of his eternal oneness. It is in this double realisation, it is in this union of two sides of an ineffable Truth of existence by either and both of which man can approach and enter into his own infinite being, that the liberated man has to live and act and feel and determine or rather have determined for him by a greatest power of his supreme self his relations with all and the inner and outer workings of his spirit. And in that unifying realisation adoration, love and devotion are not only still possible, but are a large, an inevitable and a crowning portion of the highest experience. The One who eternally becomes the Many, the Many who in their apparent division are still eternally one, the Highest who displays in us this secret and mystery of existence, not dispersed by his multiplicity, not limited by his oneness,—this is the integral knowledge, this is the reconciling experience which makes one capable of liberated action, *mukṭasya karma*.

This knowledge comes, says the Gita, by a highest bhakti. It is attained when the mind exceeds itself by a supramental and high spiritual seeing of things and when the heart too rises in unison beyond our more ignorant mental forms of

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love and devotion to a love that is calm and deep and luminous with widest knowledge, to a supreme delight in God and an illimitable adoration, the unperturbed ecstasy, the spiritual Ananda. When the soul has lost its separative personality, when it has become the Brahman, it is then that it can live in the true Person and can attain to the supreme revealing bhakti for the Purushottama and can come to know him utterly by the power of its profound bhakti, its heart's knowledge, *bhaktyâ mām abhijânâti*. That is the integral knowledge, when the heart's fathomless vision completes the mind's absolute experience,—*samagram mām jnâtwa*. "He comes to know Me" says the Gita "who and how much I am and in all the reality and principles of my being, *yâvân yaschâsmi tattwatah*." This integral knowledge is the knowledge of the Divine present in the individual; it is the entire experience of the Lord secret in the heart of man, revealed now as the supreme Self of his existence, the Sun of all his illumined consciousness, the Master and Power of all his works, the divine Fountain of all his soul's love and delight, the Lover and Beloved of his worship and adoration. It is the knowledge too of the Divine extended in the universe, of the Eternal from whom all proceeds and in whom all lives and has its being, of the Self and Spirit of the cosmos, of Vasudeva who has become all this that is, of the Lord of cosmic existence who reigns over the works of Nature. It is the knowledge of

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the divine Purusha luminous in his transcendent eternity, the form of whose being escapes from the thought of the mind but not from its silence; it is the entire living experience of him as absolute Self, supreme Brahman, supreme Soul, supreme God-head: for that seemingly incommunicable Absolute is at the same time and even in that highest status the originating Spirit of the cosmic action and Lord of all these existences. The soul of the liberated man thus enters by a reconciling knowledge, penetrates by a perfect simultaneous delight of the transcendent Divine, of the Divine in the individual and of the Divine in the universe into the Purushottama, *mam viçate tadanantaram*. He becomes one with him in his self-knowledge and self-experience, one with him in his being and consciousness and will and world-knowledge and world-impulse, one with him in the universe and in his unity with all creatures in the universe and one with him beyond world and individual in the transcendence of the eternal Infinite, *çâçwatam padam avyayam*. This is the culmination of the supreme bhakti that is at the core of the supreme knowledge.

And it then becomes evident how action continual and unceasing and of all kinds without diminution or abandonment of any part of the activities of life can be not only quite consistent with a supreme spiritual experience, but as forceful a means of reaching this highest spiritual condition as bhakti or knowledge. Nothing can be more

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positive than the Gita's statement in this matter. "And by doing also all actions always lodged in Me he attains by my grace the eternal and imperishable status." This liberating action is of the character of works done in a profound union of the will and all the dynamic parts of our nature with the Divine in ourself and the cosmos. It is done first as a sacrifice with the idea still of our self as the doer. It is done next without that idea and with a perception of the Prakriti as the sole doer. It is done last with the knowledge of that Prakriti as the supreme power of the Divine and a renunciation, a surrender of all our actions to him with the individual as a channel only and an instrument. Our works then proceed straight from the Self and Divine within us, are a part of the indivisible universal action, are initiated and performed not by us but by a vast transcendent Shakti. All that we do is done for the sake of the Lord seated in the heart of all, for the Godhead in the individual and for the fulfilment of his will in us, for the sake of the Divine in the world, for the good of all beings, for the fulfilment of the world action and the world-purpose, or in one word for the sake of the Purushottama and done really by him through his universal Shakti. These divine works, whatever their form or outward character, cannot bind, but are rather a potent means for rising out of this lower Prakriti of the three gunas to the perfection of the supreme, divine and spiritual

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nature. Disengaged from these mixed and limited dharmas we escape into the immortal Dharma which comes upon us when we make ourselves one in all our consciousness and action with the Purushottama. That oneness here brings with it the power to rise there into the immortality beyond Time. There we shall exist in his eternal transcendence. .

Thus these seven verses carefully read in the light of the knowledge already given by the Teacher are a brief, but still a comprehensive indication of the whole essential idea, the entire central method, all the kernel of the complete Yoga of the Gita.

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The essence of the teaching and the Yoga has thus been given to the disciple on the field of his work and battle and the divine Teacher now proceeds to apply it to his action, but in a way that makes it applicable to all action. Attached to a crucial example, spoken to the protagonist of Kurukshetra, the words bear a much wider significance and are a universal rule for all who are ready to ascend above the ordinary mentality and to live and act in the highest spiritual consciousness. To break out of ego and personal mind and see everything in the wideness of the self and spirit, to know God and adore him in his integral truth and in all his aspects, to surrender all oneself to the transcendent Soul of nature and existence, to possess and be possessed by the divine consciousness, to be one with the One in universality of love and delight and will and knowledge, one in him with all beings, to do works as an adoration and a sacrifice on the divine foundation of a world in which all is God and in the divine status of a liberated spirit, is the sense of the Gita's Yoga. It is a transition from the apparent to the supreme spiritual and real truth of our being, and one enters into it by putting off the many limitations of the separative consciousness and the mind's attachment

\* Gita XVIII 57-66. 73.

to the passion and unrest and ignorance, the lesser light and knowledge, the sin and virtue, the dual law and standard of the lower nature. Therefore, says the Teacher, "devoting all thyself to me, giving up in thy conscious mind all thy actions into Me, resorting to Yoga of the will and intelligence be always one in heart and consciousness with Me. If thou art that at all times, then by my grace thou shalt pass safe through all difficult and perilous passages; but if from egoism thou hear not, thou shalt fall into perdition. Vain is this thy resolve, that in thy egoism thou thinkest, saying 'I will not fight'; thy nature shall appoint thee to thy work. What from delusion thou desirest not to do, that helplessly thou shalt do bound by thy own work born of thy swabhava. The Lord is stationed in the heart of all existences, O Arjuna, and turns them all round and round mounted on a machine by his Maya. In him take refuge in every way of thy being and by his grace thou shalt come to the supreme peace and the eternal status."

These are lines that carry in them the innermost heart of this Yoga and lead to its crowning experience and we must understand them in their innermost spirit and in the whole vastness of that high summit of experience. The words express the most complete, intimate and living relation possible between God and man; they are instinct with the concentrated force of religious feeling that springs from the human being's absolute adoration, his up-



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ward surrender of his whole existence, his unreserved and perfect self-giving to the transcendent and universal Divinity from whom he comes and in whom he lives. This stress of feeling is in entire consonance with the high and enduring place that the Gita assigns to bhakti, to the love of God, to the adoration of the Highest, as the inmost spirit and motive of the supreme action and the crown and core of the supreme knowledge. The phrases used and the spiritual emotion with which they vibrate seem to give the most intense prominence possible and an utmost importance to the personal truth and presence of the Godhead. It is no abstract Absolute of the philosopher, no indifferent impersonal Presence or ineffable Silence intolerant of all relations to whom this complete surrender of all our works can be made and this closeness and intimacy of oneness with him in all the parts of our conscious existence imposed as the condition and law of our perfection or of whom this divine intervention and protection and deliverance are the promise. It is a Master of our works, a Friend and Lover of our soul, an intimate Spirit of our life, an indwelling and overdwelling Lord of all our personal and impersonal self and nature who alone can utter to us this near and moving message. And yet this is not the common relation established by the religions between man living in his sattwic or other ego-mind and some personal form and aspect of the Deity, *ishta-deva*, constructed by that mind or

offered to it to satisfy its limited ideal, aspiration or desire. That is the ordinary sense and actual character of the normal mental being's religious devotion; but here there is something wider that passes beyond the mind and its limits and its dharmas. It is something deeper than the mind that offers and something greater than the *Ishta-deva* that receives the surrender.

That which surrenders here is the *Jiva*, the essential soul, the original central and spiritual being of man, the individual *Purusha*. It is the *Jiva* delivered from the limiting and ignorant ego-sense who knows himself not as a separate personality but as an eternal portion and power and soul-becoming of the Divine, *angsha sanâtana*, the *Jiva* released and uplifted by the passing away of ignorance and established in the light and freedom of his own true and supreme nature which is one with that of the Eternal. It is this central spiritual being in us who thus enters into a perfect and closely real relation of delight and union with the origin and continent and governing Self and Power of our existence. And he who receives our surrender is no limited Deity but the *Purushottama*, the one eternal Godhead, the one supreme Soul of all that is and of all Nature, the original transcendent Spirit of existence. An immutable impersonal self-existence is his first obvious spiritual self-presentation to the experience of our liberated knowledge, the first sign of his presence, the first touch and impression of his substance. A

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universal and transcendent infinite Person or Purusha is the mysterious hidden secret of his very being, unthinkable in form of mind, *achintya-rûpa*, but very near and present to the powers of our consciousness, emotion, will, and knowledge when they are lifted out of themselves, out of their blind and petty forms into a luminous spiritual, an immeasurable supra-mental Ananda and power and gnosis. It is He, ineffable Absolute but also Friend and Lord and Enlightener and Lover, who is the object of this most complete devotion and approach and this most intimate inner becoming and surrender. This union, this relation is a thing lifted beyond the forms and laws of the limiting mind, too high for all these inferior dharmas ; it is a truth of our self and spirit. And yet or rather therefore, because it is the truth of our self and spirit, the truth of its oneness with that Spirit from which all comes and by it and as its derivations and suggestions all exists and travails, it is not a negation but a fulfilment of all that mind and life point to and bear in them as their secret and unaccomplished significance. Thus it is not by a nirvana, an exclusion and negating extinction of all that we are here, but by a nirvana, an exclusion and negating extinction of ignorance and ego and a consequent ineffable fulfilment of our knowledge and will and heart's aspiration, an uplifted and limitless living of them in the Divine, in the Eternal, *nîvasishyasi mayyeva*, a transfigurement and transference of all our con-

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sciousness to a greater inner status that there comes this supreme perfection and release in the spirit.

The crux of the spiritual problem, the character of this transition of which it is so difficult for the normal mind of man to get a true apprehension, turns altogether upon the capital distinction between the ignorant life of the ego in the lower nature and the large and luminous existence of the liberated Jiva in his own true spiritual nature. The renunciation of the first must be complete, the transition to the second absolute. This is the distinction on which the Gita dwells here with all possible emphasis. On the one side is this poor trepidant braggart egoistic condition of consciousness, *ahangkṛita bhâva*, the crippling narrowness of this little helpless separative personality according to whose view-point we ordinarily think and act, feel and respond to the touches of existence. On the other are the vast spiritual reaches of immortal fullness, bliss and knowledge into which we are admitted through union with the divine Being, of whom we are then a manifestation and expression in the eternal light and no longer a disguise in the darkness of the ego-nature. It is the completeness of this union which is indicated by the Gita's *satatam mach-chittah*. The life of the ego is founded on a construction of the apparent mental, vital and physical truth of existence, on a nexus of pragmatic relations between the individual soul and Nature, on an intellectual, emotional and sensational interpretation of things used by the little limited I in

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us to maintain and satisfy the ideas and desires of its bounded separate personality amid the vast action of the universe. All our dharmas, all the ordinary standards by which we determine our view of things and our knowledge and our action, proceed upon this narrow and limiting basis, and to follow them even in the widest wheelings round our ego centre does not carry us out of this petty circle. It is a circle in which the soul is a contented or struggling prisoner, for ever subject to the mixed compulsions of Nature.

For Purusha veils himself in this round, veils his divine and immortal being in ignorance and is subject to the law of an insistent limiting Prakriti. That law is the compelling rule of the three gunas. It is a triple stair that stumbles upward towards the divine light but cannot reach it. At its base is the law or dharma of inertia: the tamasic man inertly obeys in a customary mechanical action the suggestions and impulses, the round of will of his material and his half-intellectualised vital and sensational nature. In the middle intervenes the kinetic law or dharma; the rajasic man, vital, dynamic, active, attempts to impose himself on his world and environment, but only increases the wounding weight and tyrant yoke of his turbulent passions, desires and egoisms, the burden of his restless self-will, the yoke of his rajasic nature. At the top presses down upon life the harmonic regulative law or dharma; the sattwic man attempts to erect and follow his limited personal standards of reasoning knowledge, enlight-

ened utility or mechanised virtue, his religions and philosophies and ethical formulas, mental systems and constructions, fixed channels of idea and conduct which do not agree with the totality of the meaning of life and are constantly being broken in the movement of the wider universal purpose. The dharma of the sattwic man is the highest in the circle of the gunas ; but that too is a limited view and a dwarfed standard. Its imperfect indications lead to a petty and relative perfection ; temporarily satisfying to the enlightened personal ego, it is not founded either on the whole truth of the self or on the whole truth of Nature.

And in fact the actual life of man is not at any time one of these things alone, neither a mechanical routine execution of first crude law of Nature, nor the struggle of a kinetic soul of action, nor a victorious emergence of conscious light and reason and good and knowledge. There is a mixture of all these dharmas out of which our will and intelligence make a more or less arbitrary construction to be realised as best it can, but never in fact realised except by compromise with other compelling things in the universal Prakriti. The sattwic ideals of our enlightened will and reason are either themselves compromises, at best progressive compromises, subject to a constant imperfection and flux of change, or if absolute in their character, they can be followed only as a counsel of perfection ignored for the most part in practice or successful only as a partial influence. And if sometimes we imagine we have completely realised them,

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it is because we ignore in ourselves the subconscious or half-conscious mixture of other powers and motives that are usually as much or more than our ideals the real force in our action. That self-ignorance constitutes the whole vanity of human reason and self-righteousness; it is the dark secret lining behind the spotless white outsides of human sainthood and alone makes possible the specious egoisms of knowledge and virtue. The best human knowledge is a half knowledge and the highest human virtue a thing of mixed quality and, even when most sincerely absolute in standard, sufficiently relative in practice. As a general law of living the absolute sattwic ideals cannot prevail in conduct; indispensable as a power for the betterment and raising of personal aspiration and conduct, their insistence modifies life but cannot wholly change it, and their perfect fulfilment images itself only in a dream of the future or a world of heavenly nature free from the mixed strain of our terrestrial existence. It cannot be otherwise because neither the nature of this world nor the nature of man is or can be one single piece made of the pure stuff of sattwa.

The first door of escape we see out of this limitation of our possibilities, out of this confused mixture of dharmas is in a certain high trend towards impersonality, a movement inwards towards something large and universal and calm and free and right and pure hidden now by the limiting mind of ego. The difficulty is that while we can feel a positive release

into this impersonality in moments of the quiet and silence of our being, an impersonal activity is by no means so easy to realise. The pursuit of an impersonal truth or an impersonal will in our conduct is vitiated so long as we live at all in our normal mind by that which is natural and inevitable to that mind, the law of our personality, the subtle urge of our vital nature, the colour of ego. The pursuit of impersonal truth is turned by these influences into an unsuspected cloak for a system of intellectual preferences supported by our mind's limiting insistence; the pursuit of a disinterested impersonal action is converted into a greater authority and apparent high sanction for our personal will's interested selections and blind arbitrary persistences. On the other hand an absolute impersonality would seem to impose an equally absolute quietism, and this would mean that all action is bound to the machinery of the ego and the three gunas and to recede from life and its works the only way out of the circle. This impersonal silence however is not the last word of wisdom in the matter, because it is not the only way and crown or not all the way and the last crown of self-realisation open to our endeavour. There is a mightier fuller more positive spiritual experience in which the circle of our egoistic personality and the round of the mind's limitations vanish in the unwall'd infinity of a greatest self and spirit and yet life and its works not only remain still acceptable and possible but



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reach up and out to their widest spiritual completeness and assume a grand ascending significance.

There have been different gradations in this movement to bridge the gulf between an absolute impersonality and the dynamic possibilities of our nature. The thought and practice of the Mahayana approached this difficult reconciliation through the experience of a deep desirelessness and a large dissolving freedom from mental and vital attachment and *sanskaras* and on the positive side a universal altruism, a fathomless compassion for the world and its creatures which became as it were the flood and outpouring of the high Nirvanic state on life and action. That reconciliation was equally the sense of yet another spiritual experience, more conscious of a world significance, more profound, kindling, richly comprehensive on the side of action, a step nearer to the thought of the Gita : this experience we find or can at least read behind the utterances of the Taoist thinkers. There there seems to be an impersonal ineffable Eternal who is spirit and at the same time the one life of the universe : it supports and flows impartially in all things, *samam brahma* ; it is a One that is nothing, Asat, because other than all that we perceive and yet the totality of all these existences. The blind personality that forms like foam on this Infinite, the mobile ego with its attachments and repulsions, its likings and dislikings, its fixed mental distinctions, is an effective image that veils and deforms to us the one reality, Tao, the supreme All and Nothing.

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That can be touched only by losing personality and its little structural forms in the unseizable universal and eternal Presence and, this once achieved, we live in that a real life and have another greater consciousness which makes us penetrate all things, ourselves penetrable to all eternal influences. Here, as in the Gita, the highest way would seem to be a complete openness and self-surrender to the Eternal. "Your body is not your own," says the Taoist thinker "it is the delegated image of God : your life is not your own, it is the delegated harmony of God : your individuality is not your own, it is the delegated adaptability of God." And here too a vast perfection and liberated action are the dynamic result of the soul's surrender. The works of ego personality are a separative running counter to the bias of universal nature. This false movement must be replaced by a wise and still passivity in the hands of the universal and eternal Power, a passivity that makes us adaptable to the infinite action, in harmony with its truth, plastic to the shaping breath of the Spirit. The man who has this harmony may be motionless within and absorbed in silence, but his Self will appear free from disguises, the divine Influence will be at work in him and while he abides in tranquillity and an inward inaction, *naishkarmya*, yet he will act with an irresistible power and myriads of things and beings will move and gather under his influence. The impersonal force of the Self takes up his works, movements no longer deformed

by ego, and sovereignly acts through him for the keeping together and control of the world and its peoples, *loka-sangrahâthâya*.

There is little difference between these experiences and the first impersonal activity inculcated by the Gita. The Gita also demands of us renunciation of desire, attachment and ego, transcendence of the lower nature and the breaking up of our personality and its little formations. The Gita also demands of us to live in the Self and Spirit, to see the Self and Spirit in all and all in the Self and Spirit and all as the Self and Spirit. It demands of us like the Taoist thinker to renounce our natural personality and its works into the Self, the Spirit, the Eternal, the Brahman, *âtmani sannyasya, brahmani*. And there is this coincidence because that is always man's highest and freest possible experience of quietistic inner largeness and silence reconciled with an outer dynamic active living, the two co-existent or fused together in the impersonal infinite reality and illimitable action of the one immortal Power and sole eternal Existence. But the Gita adds a phrase of immense import that alters everything, *âtmani atho mayi*. The demand is to see all things in the self and then in "Me" the Ishwara, to renounce all action into the Self, Spirit, Brahman and thence into the supreme Person, the Purushottama. There is here a still greater and profounder complex of spiritual experience, a larger transmutation of the significance of human life, a more mystic

and heart-felt sweep of the return of the stream to the ocean, the restoration of personal works and the cosmic action to the Eternal Worker. The stress on pure impersonality has this difficulty and incompleteness for us that it reduces the inner person, the spiritual individual, that persistent miracle of our inmost being, to a temporary, illusive and mutable formation in the Infinite. The Infinite alone exists and except in a passing play has no true regard on the soul of the living creature. There can be no real and permanent relation between the soul in man and the Eternal, if that soul is even as the always renewable body no more than a transient phenomenon in the Infinite.

It is true that the ego and its limited personality are even such a temporary and mutable formation of Nature and therefore it must be broken and we must feel ourselves one with all and infinite. But the ego is not the real person ; when it has been dissolved there still remains the spiritual individual, there is still the eternal Jiva. The ego limitation disappears and the soul lives in a profound unity with the One and feels its universal unity with all things. And yet it is still our own soul that enjoys this expanse and oneness. The universal action, even when it is felt as the action of one and the same energy in all, even when it is experienced as the initiation and movement of the Ishwara, still takes different forms in different souls of men, *anshah sanâtanah*, and a different turn in their nature. The light of spiri-

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tual knowledge, the manifold universal Shakti, the eternal delight of being stream into us and around us, concentrate in the soul and flow out on the surrounding world from each as from a centre of living spiritual consciousness whose circumference is lost in the infinite. More, the spiritual individual remains as a little universe of divine existence at once independent and inseparable from the whole infinite universe of the divine self-manifestation of which we see a petty portion around us. A portion of the Transcendent, creative, he creates his own world around him even while he retains this cosmic consciousness in which are all others. If it be objected that this is an illusion which must disappear when he retreats into the transcendent Absolute, there is after all no very certain certainty in that matter. For it is still the soul in man that is the enjoyer of this release, as it was the living spiritual centre of the divine action and manifestation; there is something more than the mere self-breaking of an illusory shell of individuality in the Infinite. This mystery of our existence signifies that what we are is not only a temporary name and form of the One, but as we may say, a soul and spirit of the Divine Oneness. Our spiritual individuality of which the ego is only a misleading shadow and projection in the ignorance has or is a truth that persists beyond the ignorance; there is something of us that dwells for ever in the supreme nature of the Purushottama, *nivasishyasi mayi*. This is the profound compre-

hensiveness of the teaching of the Gita that while it recognises the truth of the universalised impersonality into which we enter by the extinction of ego, *brahma-nirvâna*,—for indeed without it there can be no liberation or at least no absolute release,—it recognises too the persistent spiritual truth of our personality as a factor of the highest experience. Not this natural but that divine and central being in us is the eternal Jiva. It is the Ishwara, Vasudeva who is all things, that takes up our mind and life and body for the enjoyment of the lower Prakriti; it is the supreme Prakriti, the original spiritual nature of the supreme Purusha that holds together the universe and appears in it as the Jiva. This Jiva then is a portion of the Purushottama's original divine spiritual being, a living power of the living Eternal. He is not merely a temporary form of lower Nature, but an eternal portion of the Highest in his supreme Prakriti, an eternal conscious ray of the divine existence and as everlasting as that supernal Prakriti. One side of the highest perfection and status of our liberated consciousness must then be to assume the true place of the Jiva in a supreme spiritual Nature, there to dwell in the glory of the supreme Purusha and there to have the joy of the eternal spiritual oneness.

This mystery of our being implies necessarily a similar supreme mystery of the being of the Purushottama, *rahasyam uttamam*. It is not an exclusive impersonality of the Absolute that is the

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highest secret. This highest secret is the miracle of a supreme Person and apparent vast Impersonal that are one, an immutable transcendent Self of all things and a Spirit that manifests itself here at the very foundation of cosmos as an infinite and multiple personality acting everywhere,—a Self and Spirit revealed to our last, closest, profoundest experience as an illimitable Being who accepts us and takes us to him, not into a blank of featureless existence, but most positively, deeply, wonderfully into all Himself and in all the ways of his and our conscious existence. This highest experience and this largest way of seeing open a profound, moving and endless significance to our parts of nature, our knowledge, will, heart's love and adoration, which is lost or diminished if we put an exclusive stress on the impersonal, because that stress suppresses or minimises or does not allow of the intensest fulfilment of movements and powers that are a portion of our deepest nature, intensities and luminosities that are attached to the closest essential fibres of our self-experience. It is not the austerity of knowledge alone that can help us; there is room and infinite room for the heart's love and aspiration illumined and uplifted by knowledge, a more mystically clear, a greater calmly passionate knowledge. It is by the perpetual unified closeness of our heart-consciousness, mind consciousness, all consciousness, *satatam machchittah*, that we get the widest, the deepest, the most integral experience of our oneness with the

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Eternal. A nearest oneness in all the being, profoundly individual in a divine passion even in the midst of universality, even at the top of transcendence is here enjoined on the human soul as its way to reach the Highest and its way to possess the perfection and the divine consciousness to which it is called by its nature as a spirit. The intelligence and will have to turn the whole existence in all its parts to the Ishwara, to the divine Self and Master of that whole existence, *buddhi-yogam upâçritya*. The heart has to cast all other emotion into the delight of oneness with him and the love of Him in all creatures. The sense spiritualised has to see and hear and feel him everywhere. The life has to be utterly his life in the Jiva. All the actions have to proceed from his sole power and sole initiation in the will, knowledge, organs of action, senses, vital parts, body. This way is deeply impersonal because the separateness of ego is abolished for the Soul universalised and restored to transcendence. And yet it is intimately personal because it soars to a transcendent passion and power of indwelling and oneness. A featureless extinction may be a rigorous demand of the mind's logic of self-annulment, it is not the last word of the supreme mystery, *rahasyam uttamam*.

The refusal of Arjuna to persevere in his divinely appointed work proceeded from the ego sense in him, *ahankâra*. Behind it was a mixture and confusion and tangled error of ideas and impulses of the sattwic, rajasic, tamasic ego, the vital nature's



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fear of sin and its personal consequences, the heart's recoil from individual grief and suffering, the clouded reason's covering of egoistic impulses by self-deceptive specious pleas of right and virtue, our nature's ignorant shrinking from the ways of God because they seem other than the ways of man and impose things terrible and unpleasant on his nervous and emotional parts and his intelligence. The spiritual consequences will be infinitely worse now than before, now that a higher truth and a greater way and spirit of action have been revealed to him, if yet persisting in his egoism he perseveres in a vain and impossible refusal. For it is a vain resolution, a futile recoil, since it springs only from a temporary failure of strength, a strong but passing deviation from the principle of energy of his inmost character and is not the true will and way of his nature. If now he casts down his arms, he will yet be compelled by that nature to resume them when he sees the battle and slaughter go on without him, his abstention a defeat of all for which he has lived, the cause for whose service he was born weakened and bewildered by the absence or inactivity of its protagonist, vanquished and afflicted by the cynical and unscrupulous strength of the champions of a self-regarding unrighteousness and injustice. And in this return there will be no spiritual virtue. It was a confusion of the ideas and feelings of the ego mind that impelled his refusal; it will be his nature working through a restoration of the characteristic ideas and feelings of

the ego mind that will compel him to annul his refusal. But whatever the direction, this continued subjection to the ego will mean a worse, a more fatal spiritual refusal, a perdition, *vinashti*; for it will be a definite falling away from a greater truth of his being than that which he has followed in the ignorance of the lower nature. He has been admitted to a higher consciousness, a new self-realisation, he has been shown the possibility of a divine instead of an egoistic action; the gates have been opened before him of a divine and spiritual in place of a merely intellectual, emotional, sensuous and vital life. He is called to be no longer a great blind instrument, but a conscious soul and an enlightened power and vessel of the Godhead.

For there is this possibility within us: there is open to us even at our human highest this consummation and transcendence. The ordinary mind and life of man is a half enlightened and mostly an ignorant development and a partial uncompleted manifestation of something concealed within him. There is a godhead there concealed from himself, subliminal to his consciousness, immobilised behind the obscure veil of a working that is not wholly his own and the secret of which he has not yet mastered. He finds himself in the world thinking and willing and feeling and acting and he takes himself instinctively or intellectually conceives of himself or at least conducts his life as a separate self-existent being who has the freedom of his thought

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and will and feeling and action. He bears the burden of his sin and error and suffering and takes the responsibility and merit of his knowledge and virtue; he claims the right to satisfy his sattwic, rajasic or tamasic ego and arrogates the power to shape his own destiny and to turn the world to his own uses. It is this idea of himself through which Nature works in him, and she deals with him according to his own conception, but fulfils all the time the will of the greater Spirit within her. The error of this self-view of man is like most of his errors the distortion of a truth, a distortion that creates a whole system of erroneous and yet effective values. What is true of his spirit he attributes to his ego-personality and gives it a false application, a false form and a mass of ignorant consequences. The ignorance lies in this fundamental deficiency of his surface consciousness that he identifies himself only with the outward mechanical part of him which is a convenience of Nature and with so much only of the soul as reflects and is reflected in these workings. He misses the greater inner spirit within which gives to all his mind and life and creation and action an unfulfilled promise and a hidden significance. A universal Nature here obeys the power of the Spirit who is the master of the universe, shapes each creature and determines its action according to the law of its own nature, Swabhava, shapes man too and determines his action according to the general law of nature of his kind, the law of a mental being

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emmeshed and ignorant in the life and the body, shapes too each man and determines his individual action according to the law of his own distinct type and the variations of his own original swabhava. It is this universal Nature that forms and directs the mechanical workings of the body and the instinctive operations of our vital and nervous parts; and there our subjection to her is very obvious. And she has formed and directs the action too, hardly less mechanical as things now are, of our sense-mind and will and intelligence. Only, while in the animal the mind workings are a wholly mechanical obedience to Prakriti, man has this distinction that he embodies a conscious development in which the soul more actively participates, and that gives to his outward mentality the sense, useful to him, indispensable, but very largely a misleading sense, of a certain freedom and increasing mastery of his instrumental nature. And it is especially misleading because it blinds him to the hard fact of his bondage and his false idea of freedom prevents him from finding a true liberty and lordship. For the freedom and mastery of man over his nature are hardly even real and cannot be complete until he becomes aware of the Divinity within him and is in possession of his own real self and spirit other than the ego, *âtmanvân*. It is that which Nature is labouring to express in mind and life and body; it is that which imposes on her this or that law of being and working, Swabhava; it is that which shapes the outward destiny and the

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evolution of the soul within us. It is therefore only when he is in possession of his real self and spirit that his nature can become a conscious instrument and enlightened power of the godhead.

For then, when we enter into that inmost self of our existence, we come to know that in us and in all is the one Spirit and Godhead whom all Nature serves and manifests and we ourselves are soul of this Soul, spirit of this Spirit, our body his delegated image, our life a movement of the rhythm of his life, our mind a sheath of his consciousness, our senses his instruments, our emotions and sensations the seekings of his delight of being, our actions a means of his purpose, our freedom only a shadow, suggestion or glimpse while we are ignorant, but when we know him and ourselves a prolongation and effective channel of his immortal freedom. Our masteries are a reflection of his power at work, our best knowledge a partial light of his knowledge, the highest most potent will of our spirit a projection and delegation of the will of this Spirit in all things who is the Master and Soul of the universe. It is the Lord seated in the heart of every creature who has been turning us in all our inner and outer action during the ignorance as if mounted' on a machine on the wheel of this Maya of the lower Nature. And whether obscure in the ignorance or luminous in the knowledge, it is for him in us and him in the world that we have our existence. To live consciously and integrally in this knowledge and this truth is to escape from ego and

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break out of Maya. All other highest dharmas are only a preparation for this Dharma, and all Yoga is only a means by which we can come first to some kind of union and finally, if we have the full light, to an integral union with the Master and supreme Soul and Self of our existence. The greatest Yoga is to take refuge from all the perplexities and difficulties of our nature with this indwelling Lord of all Nature, to turn to him with our whole being, with the life and body and sense and mind and heart and understanding, with our whole dedicated knowledge and will and action, *sarva-bhâvena*, in every way of our conscious self and our instrumental nature. And when we can at all times and entirely do this, then the divine Light and Love and Power takes hold of us, fills both self and instruments and leads us safe through all the doubts and difficulties and perplexities and perils that beset our soul and our life, leads us to a supreme peace and the spiritual freedom of our immortal and eternal status, *parâm çântim, sthânam çâçwatam*.

For after giving out all the laws, the dharmas, and the deepest essence of its Yoga, after saying that beyond all the first secrets revealed to the mind of man by the transforming light of spiritual knowledge, *gûhyât*, this is a still deeper more secret truth, *gûhyataram*, the Gita suddenly declares that there is yet a supreme word that it has to speak, *paramam vachah*, and a most secret truth of all, *sarva-gûhyatamam*. This secret of secrets the Teacher will tell

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to Arjuna as his highest good because he is the chosen and beloved soul, *ishta*. For evidently, as had already been declared by the Upanishad, it is only the rare soul chosen by the Spirit for the revelation of his very body, *tanum swâm*, who can be admitted to this mystery, because he alone is near enough in heart and mind and life to the Godhead to respond truly to it in all his being and to make it a living practice. The last, the closing supreme word of the Gita expressing the highest mystery is spoken in two brief, direct and simple slokas and these are left without farther comment or enlargement to sink into the mind and reveal their own fullness of meaning in the soul's experience. For it is alone this inner incessantly extending experience that can make evident the infinite deal of meaning with which are for ever pregnant these words in themselves apparently so slight and simple. And we feel as they are being uttered that it was this for which the soul of the disciple was being prepared all the time and the rest was only an enlightening and enabling discipline and doctrine. Thus runs this secret of secrets, the highest most direct message of the Ishwara. "Become my-minded, my lover and adorer, a sacrificer to me, bow thyself to me, to me thou shalt come, this is my pledge and promise to thee, for dear art thou to me. Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in me alone. I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve."

The Gita throughout has been insisting on a

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great and well-built discipline of Yoga, a large and clearly traced philosophical system, on the Swabhava and the Swadharma, on the sattwic law of life as leading out of itself by a self-exceeding exaltation to a free spiritual dharma of immortal existence utterly wide in its spaces and high-lifted beyond the limitation of even this highest guna, on many rules and means and injunctions and conditions of perfection, and now suddenly it seems to break out of its own structure and says to the human soul, "Abandon all dharmas, give thyself to the Divine alone, to the supreme Godhead above and around and within thee: that is all that thou needest, that is the truest and greatest way, that is the real deliverance." The Master of the worlds in the form of the divine Charioteer and Teacher of Kurukhshetra has revealed to man the magnificent realities of God and Self and Spirit and the nature of the complex world and the relation of man's mind and life and heart and senses to the Spirit and the victorious means by which through his own spiritual self-discipline and effort he can rise out of mortality into immortality and out of his limited mental into his infinite spiritual existence. And now speaking as the Spirit and Godhead in man and in all things he says to him, "All this personal effort and self-discipline will not in the end be needed, all following and limitation of rule and dharma can at last be thrown away as hampering encumbrances if thou canst make a complete surrender to Me, depend alone on the Spirit and



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Godhead within thee and all things and trust to his sole guidance. Turn all thy mind to me and fill it with the thought of me and my presence. Turn all thy heart to me, make thy every action whatever it be a sacrifice and offering to me. That done, leave me to do my will with thy life and soul and action ; do not be grieved or perplexed by my dealings with thy mind and heart and life and works or troubled because they do not seem to follow the laws and dharmas man imposes on himself to guide his limited will and intelligence. My ways are the ways of a perfect wisdom and power and love that knows all things and combines all its movements in view of a perfect eventual result ; for it is refining and weaving together the many threads of an integral perfection. I am here with thee in thy chariot of battle revealed as the Master of existence within and without thee and I repeat the absolute assurance, the infallible promise that I will lead thee to myself through and beyond all sorrow and evil. Whatever difficulties and perplexities arise, be sure of this that I am leading thee to a complete divine life in the universal and an immortal existence in the transcendent Spirit."

The secret thing, *gûhyam*, that all deep spiritual knowledge reveals to us, mirrored in various teachings and justified in the soul's experience, is for the Gita the secret of the spiritual self hidden within us of which mind and external Nature are only manifestations or figures. It is the secret of the constant relations between soul and Nature, Purusha and

Prakriti, the secret of an indwelling Godhead who is the lord of all existence and veiled from us in its forms and movements. These are the truths taught in many ways by Vedanta and Sankhya and Yoga and synthetised in the earlier chapters of the Gita. And amidst all their apparent distinctions they are one truth and all the different ways of Yoga are various means of spiritual self-discipline by which our unquiet mind and blinded life are stilled and turned towards this many-aspected One and the secret truth of self and God made so real to us and intimate that we can either consciously live and dwell in it or lose our separate selves in the Eternal and no longer be compelled at all by the mental Ignorance.

The more secret thing, *gûhyataram*, developed by the Gita is the profound reconciling truth of the divine Purushottama, at once self and Purusha, supreme Brahman and a sole, intimate, mysterious, ineffable Godhead. That gives to the thought a larger and more deeply understanding foundation for an ultimate knowledge and to the spiritual experience a greater and more fully comprehending and comprehensive Yoga. This deeper mystery is founded on the secret of the supreme spiritual Prakriti and of the Jiva, an eternal portion of the Divine in that eternal and this manifested Nature and of one spirit and essence with him in his immutable self-existence. This profounder knowledge escapes from the elementary distinction of spiritual experience between the Beyond and what is here. For the

Transcendent beyond the worlds is at the same time Vasudeva who is all things in all worlds; he is the Lord standing in the heart of every creature and the self of all existences and the origin and supernal meaning of everything that he has put forth in his Prakriti. He is manifested in his Vibhutis and he is the Spirit in Time who compells the action of the world and the Sun of all knowledge and the Lover and Beloved of the soul and the Master of all works and sacrifice. The result of an inmost opening to this deeper, truer, more secret mystery is the Gita's Yoga of integral knowledge, integral works and integral bhakti. It is the simultaneous experience of spiritual universality and a free and perfected spiritual individuality, of an entire union with God and an entire dwelling in him as at once the frame of the soul's immortality and the support and power of our liberated action in the world and the body.

And now there comes the supreme word and most secret thing of all, *gûhyatamam*, that the Spirit and Godhead is an Infinite free from all dharmas and though he conducts the world according to fixed laws and leads man through his dharmas of ignorance and knowledge, sin and virtue, right and wrong, liking and disliking and indifference, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow and the rejection of these opposites, through his physical and vital, intellectual, emotional, ethical and spiritual forms and rules and standards, yet the Spirit and Godhead transcends all these things, and if we too can cast away all dependence on

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dharmas, surrender ourself to this free and eternal Spirit and, taking care only to keep ourselves absolutely and exclusively open to him, trust to the light and power and delight of the Divine in us and, unafraid and ungrieving, accept only his guidance, then that is the truest, the greatest release and that brings the absolute and inevitable perfection of our self and nature. This is the way offered to the chosen of the Spirit,—to those only in whom he takes the greatest delight because they are nearest to him and most capable of oneness and of being even as he, freely consenting and concordant with Nature in her highest power and movement, universal in soul consciousness, transcendent in the spirit.

For a time comes in spiritual development when we become aware that all our effort and action are only our mental and vital reactions to the silent and secret insistence of a greater Presence in and around us. It is borne in on us that all our Yoga, our aspiration and our endeavour are imperfect or narrow forms, because disfigured or at least limited by the mind's associations, demands, prejudgments, predilections, mistranslations or half translations of a vaster truth. Our ideas and experiences and efforts are mental images only of greatest things which would be done more perfectly, directly, freely, largely, more in harmony with the universal and eternal will by that Power itself in us if we could only put ourselves passively as instruments in the hands of a supreme and absolute strength and

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wisdom. That Power is not separate from us ; it is our own self one with the self of all others and at the same time a transcendent Being and an immanent Person. Our existence, our action taken up into this greatest Existence would be no longer, as it seems to us now, individually our own in a mental separation. It would be the vast movement of an Infinity and an intimate ineffable Presence ; it would be the constant spontaneity of formation and expression in us of this deep universal self and this transcendent Spirit. The Gita indicates that in order that that may wholly be, the surrender must be without reservations ; our Yoga, our life, our state of inner being must be determined freely by this living Infinite, not predetermined by our mind's insistence on this or that dharma or any dharma. The divine Master of the Yoga, *yogeshwarah krishnah*, will then himself take up our Yoga and raise us to our utmost possible perfection, not the perfection of any external or mental standard or limiting rule, but vast and comprehensive, to the mind incalculable. It will be a perfection developed by an all-seeing Wisdom according to the whole truth, first indeed of our human swabhava, but afterwards of a greater thing into which it will open, a spirit and power illimitable, immortal, free and all-transmuting, the light and splendour of a divine and infinite nature.

All must be given as material of that transmutation. An omniscient consciousness will take up our

knowledge and our ignorance, our truth and our error, cast away their forms of insufficiency, *sarva-dharmân parityajya*, and transform all into its infinite light. An almighty Power will take up our virtue and sin, our right and wrong, our strength and our weakness, cast away their tangled figures, *sarva-dharmân parityajya*, and transform all into its transcendent purity and universal good and infallible force. An ineffable Ananda will take up our petty joy and sorrow, our struggling pleasure and pain, cast away their discordances and imperfect rhythms, *sarva-dharmân parityajya*, and transform all into its transcendent and universal unimaginable delight. All that all the Yogas can do will be done and more ; but it will be done in a greater seeing way, with a greater wisdom and truth than any human teacher, saint or sage can give us. The inner spiritual state to which this supreme Yoga will take us, will be above all that is here and yet comprehensive of all things in this and other worlds, but with a spiritual transformation of all, without limitation, without bondage, *sarva-dharmân parityajya*. The infinite existence, consciousness and delight of the Godhead in its calm silence and bright boundless activity will be there, will be its essential, fundamental, universal stuff, mould and character. And in that mould of infinity, the Divine made manifest will overtly dwell, no longer concealed by his Yogamaya, and whenever and as he wills build in us whatever shapes of the Infinite, translucent forms of knowledge, thought,

love, spiritual joy, power and action according to his self-fulfilling will and immortal pleasure. And there will be no binding effect on the free soul and the unaffected nature, no unescapable crystallising into this or that inferior formula. For all the action will be executed by the power of the Spirit in a divine freedom, *sarva-dharmân parityajya*. An unfallen abiding in the transcendent Spirit, *param dhâma*, will be the foundation and the assurance of this spiritual state. An intimate understanding oneness with universal being and all creatures, released from the evil and suffering of the separative mind but wisely regardful of true distinctions, will be the conditioning power. A constant delight, oneness and harmony of the eternal individual here with the Divine and all that he is will be the effect of this integral liberation. The baffling problems of our human existence of which Arjuna's difficulty stands as an acute example, are created by our separative personality in the ignorance. This Yoga because it puts the soul of man into its right relation with God and world-existence and makes our action God's, the knowledge and will shaping and moving it his and our life the harmony of a divine self-expression, is the way to their total disappearance.

The whole Yoga is revealed, the great word of the teaching is given, and Arjuna the chosen human soul is once more turned, no longer in his egoistic mind but in this greatest self-knowledge, to the divine action. The Vibhuti is ready for the divine life in

## ESSAYS ON THE GITA

the human, his conscious spirit for the works of the liberated soul, *mukṭasya karmā*. Destroyed is the illusion of the mind; the soul's memory of its self and its truth concealed so long by the misleading shows and forms of our life has returned to it and become its normal consciousness: all doubt and perplexity gone, it can turn to the execution of the command and do faithfully whatever work for God and the world may be appointed and apportioned to it by the Master of our being, the Spirit and Godhead self-fulfilled in Time and universe.

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